

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SS-14 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-12 PRS-01 L-03 CU-04

T-03 RSR-01 /101 W

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R 151600 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7806

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 2052

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR XE US IT KN

SUBJECT: ITALIAN/ NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS

REF: ROME 1768

1. SUMMARY: A NORTH KOREAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION HAS VISITED ITALY, PRIMARILY FOR ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL CONTACTS. ITALIANS HAVE AGREED TO ITALIAN TOUR FOR NORTH KOREAN BALLET GROUP. SOUTH KOREANS HAVE COMPLAINED RE NORTH KOREAN ACTIVITIES HERE, AND HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT ALTHOUGH GOI INTENDS TO ENLARGE ITS CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC CONTACTS WITH DPRK, IT HAS REFUSED TO DISCUSS POLITICAL QUESTIONS OR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA AT THIS TIME. END SUMMARY.

2. NORTH KOREAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION VISITED ITALY MARCH 5-13. DELEGATION WAS HEADED BY TSENG TSU JI, PRESIDENT OF INTER-PARLIAMENTA-
RY
GROUP OF KOREAN POPULAR ASSEMBLY, AND INCLUDED VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE, BANG TAI LYUL. ACCORDING PRESS, NORTH KOREANS WERE RECEIVED BY COMMUNISTS, SOCIALISTS AND CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT PARLIAMENTARIANS, MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY BEMPORAD, AND HAD NUMEROUS CONTACTS IN ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL FIELDS. MEDIA COVERAGE OF NORTH KOREANS' ACTIVITIES WAS ROUTINE. DURING MARCH 10 PRESS CONFERENCE, TSENG TSU JI REVIEWED ECONOMIC ACCOMPLISH-

MENTS OF DPRK AND EXPRESSED HOPE FOR INCREASED TRADE WITH ITALY.
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ON POLITICAL SIDE, HE OUTLINED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH KOREA AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT TWO KOREAS WOULD EVENTUALLY BECOME ONE NATION WITHIN A " CONFEDERATED STATE." RE RELATIONS WITH JAPAN, HE ASSERTED THAT SINCE ASSUMPTION OF OFFICE OF PRIME MINISTER TANAKA, GOJ POLICY APPEARS TO HAVE TURNED AWAY FROM POSITION OF OPPOSITION TO NORTH KOREA MAINTAINED BY PREVIOUS JAPANESE GOVERNMENTS. HE THANKED ITALIAN IPU GROUP FOR VOTING IN FAVOR OF ADMISSION OF NORTH KOREA TO IPU DURING IPU MEETING HELD IN ROME.

3. ON MARCH 13 RESPONSIBLE ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL PROVIDED ADDITIONAL DETAILS ON NORTH KOREANS' VISIT. ACCORDING SOURCE, NORTH KOREANS HAD GENERALLY ADHERED TO ITALIAN CONDITIONS RESTRICTING THEIR ACTIVITIES TO ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL MATTERS. HE SAID THAT DESPITE SEVERAL ATTEMPTS, KOREANS' REQUEST TO DISCUSS POLITICAL MATTERS AT FOREIGN MINISTRY WERE REFUSED. HE EXPLAINED KOREANS' MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY UNDERSECRETARY BEMPORAD AS CHANCE ENCOUNTER WHICH TOOK PLACE AT ITALIAN PARLIAMENT AND AT WHICH NO MATTERS OF POLITICAL SUBSTANCE WERE DISCUSSED. OFFICIAL SAID THAT KOREANS HAD CONTACTS WITH MIDDLE- LEVEL OFFICIALS AT MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE, WITH SEMI- OFFICIAL FOREIGN TRADE INSTITUTO, WITH IRI (LARGE STATE HOLDING COMPANY), AND CONFINDUSTRIA (CONFEDERATION OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS). IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, OFFICIAL SAID QUESTION OF EXCHANGE OF TRADE MISSION OFFICES DID NOT RPT NOT COME UP ALTHOUGH ITALIANS EXPECT TO SEND MARKET SURVEY MISSION COMPOSED OF ITALIAN BUSINESS MEN AND ACCOMPANIED BY FOREIGN TRADE INSTITUTE OFFICIAL TO NORTH KOREA IN APRIL OR MAY AND RECEIVE SIMILAR NORTH KOREAN GROUP IN ITALY.

4. IN RESPONSE TO QUERY, OFFICIAL SAID THAT SOUTH KOREAN EMBASSY COUNSELOR HAD CALLED AT FOREIGN MINISTRY TO COMPLAIN ABOUT ITALIAN AGREEMENT TO ADMIT NORTH KOREAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION. SOURCE SAID HE EXPLAINED TO SOUTH KOREAN COUNSELOR THAT CLIMATE OF DETENTE CREATED BY DIRECT SOUTH/ NORTH KOREAN CONTACTS HAD HAD ITS IMPACT ON ITALIAN ATTITUDE TOWARD DPRK. ACCORDING SOURCE, HE ALSO EXPLAINED THAT GROWING ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL CONTACTS BETWEEN ITALY AND DPRK WERE DESIGNED IN PART TO SET ASIDE FOR PROLONGED PERIOD QUESTION OF POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN ITALY AND NORTH KOREA, AND ITALIANS HAVE INDICATED TO NORTH KOREANS THAT ALTHOUGH THEY ARE RECEPTIVE TO INCREASED CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC TIES, GOI IS NOT YET PREPARED TO DISCUSS POLITICAL CONTACTS OR ESTABLISH-

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MENT OF DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. OFFICIAL SAID ROK COUNSELOR SEEMED SATISFIED WITH EXPLANATION.

5. FURTHER RE INCREASED ITALIAN CONTACTS WITH NORTH KOREA, OFFICIAL SAID GOI HAS AGREED TO ADMIT 107- MEMBER NORTH KOREAN BALLET GROUP WHICH WILL TOUR A NUMBER OF ITALIAN CITIES BETWEEN MARCH 23 AND APRIL 12 UNDER SPONSORSHIP OF ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY' S CULTURAL FEDERATION. VOLPE

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts:
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 15 MAR 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973ROME02052
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: RR
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730329/aaaahuyq.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 73 ROME 1768
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 17 SEP 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <17-Sep-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <16-Nov-2001 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> srp 971204; srp 971204
Subject: ITALIAN/ NORTH KOREAN RELATIONS
TAGS: PFOR, IT, KN, US, XE, n/a
To: EA
SECSTATE WASHDC INFO SEOUL
TOKYO
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005